



## WESTERN NEWS

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# Troy agrees to sign EPA funding resolution

**By ROGER MORRIS**

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The Troy City Council agreed Wednesday night to sign a resolution seeking adequate funding for the Libby superfund project.

The resolution was presented to the council by Mike Giesey, president of the board of directors for the Center for Asbestos Related Disease and a Troy resident.

It seeks to stem the budget cuts that are slowing the Environmental Protection Agency's cleanup of toxic asbestos-laced vermiculite insulation in the Libby-Troy area. Initially, that cleanup was projected to take 3-5 years, and then perhaps as long as 8 years. With recent cuts to the EPA's budget, the Libby cleanup project is seeing less money

spurring fear that the effort could last beyond 10 years.

Giesey told the city council that the resolution is a way for the area's residents to speak with one voice.

"We've been told time and again that there is no stronger message than from a community which speaks as one," Giesey said. "We need this cleaned so we can move on."

Because of recent budget cutbacks, the EPA has delayed cleanup of Troy properties with asbestos-contaminated vermiculite.

Mayor John Brown asked for a week for the council to read the resolution. Initially council members were concerned that Troy was not mentioned as being included in the Superfund area described as a 22-mile radius around Libby.

Considering the negative stigma associated with the contamination is not a problem as long as properties in Troy are cleaned, said Councilwoman Laura Schrader.

"I like the way (wording) it is," Brown said. "I don't have a problem with it. We have properties here that have the insulation."

Councilman Ron Pierce agreed that the city needed to be involved.

"We need assurances that when they have the extra dime, they come and clean it up," said Councilman Don Banning.

Brown asked Giesey to call him when the final resolution was completed and ready for the mayor's signature.

The resolution will be presented to Mike Leavitt, the new director of the EPA, who is

scheduled to visit Libby sometime during the early part of 2004.

The EPA had estimated that at \$20 million a year, they could clean 250 properties per year and be done within a three- to five-year period. However, the Libby project's operating budget has been cut by \$5 million a year reducing the cleanup to about 130 properties per year and prolonging the project to 10-12 years.

"We need to stand up to what was promised us," Giesey told the Troy council.

In addition, a letter-writing campaign has been organized to get individual letters from property owners expressing similar concerns. Those letters can be dropped off at Timberline Auto Center in Libby.